



AOT in Action

Welcome to AOT in Action, your weekly e-newsletter from the Arizona Office of Tourism (AOT).

A Message from Director Margie A. Emmermann:

Good morning,

This Sunday, January 18, more than 30,000 marathoners will hit the ground running in the Sixth Annual P.F. Chang's [Rock n' Roll Arizona Marathon](#) & ½ Marathon. AOT is thrilled to join the Greater Phoenix, Scottsdale and Tempe Convention and Visitors Bureaus in sponsoring the event.

Each year, runners from across the country and around the world travel to the Grand Canyon State to compete in this signature sporting event. Even more importantly, the marathon – as one of a few activities that directly links the diverse and exciting cities of Phoenix, Scottsdale and Tempe – is a gateway to unique travel adventures that only Arizona provides.

In our [2007 survey](#) of the marathon, more than half of the runners were from out-of-state, which meant that a significant number of race participants were spending money on hotels, food, shopping and other items in Phoenix, Scottsdale and Tempe, the race co-hosts.

With more than half of the runners coming from out of state, we are certain that these visitors will take advantage of their free time to discover the Grand Canyon State's amazing travel destinations.

Best of luck to all the runners!

AOT News

AOT's Updated Reference Guide is Now Available Online

AOT's 2009 [Reference Guide](#) is now accessible online. The guide is filled with innovation marketing techniques, provides instructions and practical advice for developing a marketing plan

to help promote Arizona destinations. The Reference Guide and other tool kits are available at www.azot.gov/section.aspx?sid=49.

AOT Calls for All Calendar of Events Items

The Arizona Office of Tourism is requesting 2009 event information to be considered for the Calendar of Events posted on www.ArizonaGuide.com. These items encourage tourists to experience special occasions held throughout Arizona. For events to be considered, they must be open to the public and of interest to tourists.

Submissions should include the date and year; community in which the event takes place; name of event; venue; venue address; description of event; admission, event time; phone number and/or Web site for the public to obtain additional information.

Please include your contact information along with your submission so that we may reach you with any questions we may have prior to posting your event. Photography to accompany listings may be included, and we can supply you with an image information form. If you have questions or would like an event submission form, please contact Marjorie Magnusson at Mmagnusson@azot.gov or 602-364-3695.

Love is in the Arizona Air

The Arizona Office of Tourism will be promoting the passionate side of Arizona, January 1 – February 28, 2009. Travel partners can post tourism-related “romantic” specials, discounts and packages that are valid during this time. AOT will be touting the Grand Canyon State as a romantic destination by highlighting Arizona’s fine food, wonderful wines, world-class accommodations, and rejuvenating spas, along with the state’s gorgeous sunsets, lush desert landscapes, scenic mountains, and starry skies. Offers can include romantic accommodation packages, tours to romantic areas, a vacation that will rekindle the romance, etc.

To participate, submit your offers visit the [Travel Deals](#) section of www.azot.gov. Once you begin adding your travel deal, be sure to select the special promotion “Love is in the Arizona Air.” If you need additional assistance, please contact Marjorie Magnusson at 602-364-3695 or via e-mail at mmagnusson@azot.gov.

Tourism Advisory Council

Introducing the Governor's Tourism Advisory Council

The Tourism Advisory Council is comprised of fifteen members appointed by the governor for five years terms. This group of dedicated tourism leaders meets twice a year to advise the Arizona Office of Tourism on issues such as marketing strategies, budget preparations and programs that help develop tourism products throughout Arizona.

The council members represent different regions of the state and industries from recreational and tourist attractions, lodging, restaurants, transportation, other tourism-related businesses and the general public.

Below is a link to brief profiles of each member of the TAC group.
<http://www.arizonaguide.com/DisplayArticle.aspx?id=110>

For more information about the Governor's [Tourism Advisory Council](http://www.azot.gov), please visit www.azot.gov.

AOT Events

Toronto Golf Show Brochure Distribution Opportunity

AOT invites you to exhibit your brochures at the Toronto Star Golf & Travel Show in Toronto, Ontario, February 27 - March 1, 2009. This consumer show expects to attract more than 30,000 Canadian golfers during a three-day timeframe. The cost is \$250, plus shipping. Space is limited. If you are interested in sending your brochures, please contact Kristy Swanson at 602-364-3696 or via e-mail at kswanson@azot.gov.

Upcoming Events

Event – Canada Sales and Media Mission

Date – January 19-23, 2009

Location – Toronto, Calgary and Vancouver

Event – Seattle Sales Mission

Date – January 25-29

Location – Seattle, Washington

Event – Go West Summit

Date – January 26-29

Location – Albuquerque, New Mexico

Industry News

Phoenix-area's marquee events an economic ray of light

The following guest opinion was posted by the Tucson Citizen on Jan. 7, 2009. It is written by Craig Jackson, chairman and CEO of the Barrett-Jackson Collector Car Auction

If you have ever questioned how special events matter to the economic vitality of a community, the current financial difficulties should remove all doubt. Arizona, like the country, is suffering. Jobs are being lost. Tax revenues are down. And that means fewer resources for police, fire and essential government services. So where will a surge in new economic activity come from in the short term? From our amazing collection of special events in the Phoenix area.

In the period of about six weeks, we will watch the Fiesta Bowl, the Barrett-Jackson Collector Car Auction, FBR Open, PF Chang's Rock 'n' Roll Marathon and Scottsdale All-Arabian Horse Show roll through town. Then, spring training arrives. Then Phoenix International Raceway brings its April race to the Valley. And with them come tens of thousands of out-of-state visitors spending billions of dollars at local hotels, restaurants, bars and stores.

From Jan. 11-18, we will do our part welcoming more than 200,000 visitors to WestWorld for the 38th annual Barrett-Jackson Collector Car Event. Nearly half will come from outside Arizona. Indeed, they come from all 50 states and 14 countries. We will again have nearly 40 hours of live national television, showcasing the Phoenix area to the country. Can anyone imagine how much worse the local economy would be if we did not have these special events, and done a nice job nurturing them over the years? They are tourism's trophies and they matter now more than ever.

Consider, too, what tremendous resources and opportunities they are for local residents as well. No one ever forgets the legendary 16th Hole at the FBR Open. The grace and beauty of the Scottsdale All-Arabian Horse Show is something everyone should experience. A son will always talk about a visit to the Fiesta Bowl or spring training with his father.

Experiences at Barrett-Jackson are no less dramatic, whether one consigns a car for sale, registers as a bidder and buys the automobile of their dreams or simply takes a trip down memory lane looking at approximately 1,000 of the finest machines on the planet. This year, we are describing our experience as "Something For Everybody." There's only one place to find an experience unlike any other, whether you love automobiles, love a good time or are looking for magical moments. So whether you love horses or horsepower, pins or pigskins, NASCAR or no-hitters, economic ray of lights are just around the corner. Enjoy them. And enjoy the benefits.

Trade Shows Trying to Stay Relevant in Struggling Economy

Some of America's biggest trade shows are trying to remain relevant as companies drastically cut back on travel, entertainment—and trade-show expenses. Apple CEO Steve Jobs stunned the industry in December by announcing that this year's Macworld, put on by IDG World Expo and opening Tuesday would be Apple's last—and that he would not attend. "When the economy is down, the first thing to go is trade shows," says Richard Doherty, an independent analyst for the Envision Group. In Las Vegas, North America's largest trade show, the Consumer Electronics Show, isn't what it once was. CES says it has a 10 percent drop in exhibitors; 2,700, down from 3,000. (*Page 1B, USA Today*)

Airlines Discounting Fares to Help Fill Empty Seats

A wave of fare sales has spread across the airline industry in the early days of the new year as the weak economy leaves carriers unable to fill seats—even after they drastically reduced capacity and some have considered cutting more. Many experts and even executives at some airlines had expected that after deep capacity cuts went into effect, starting in September, fare discount sales would be fewer and further between. But fuel prices have come down significantly, and the weak economy has eroded demand for air travel. Even so, on average, regular fares are higher today than in the past few years, said Rick Seaney, head of airfare research site www.FareCompare.com. He noted that there were 30 attempted airfare hikes between summer 2007 and summer 2008, two-thirds of which were successful.

A handful of major carriers and discount airlines have launched fare sales since Dec. 31. Others are expected to follow with sales of their own, or to at least match discounts offered by rivals on competitive routes. Seaney said. Discount carrier AirTran Airways, yesterday announced a nationwide sale with one-way fares starting as low as \$39. Flights must be purchased by Jan. 15. (AP; www.HonoluluAdvertiser.com/Business)

IATA: WORST SINCE 1991

The global economic collapse is going to hit airlines harder and longer than they thought, IATA said as it issued its first forecast of a decline in passenger traffic since 1991. While the airlines have cut capacity enough to survive the downturn, their own competitive nature will prevent them from maintaining higher fares, IATA said. "Recession is now forecast for North America, Europe and Japan late this year and into 2009," IATA said in its economic briefing, "The Impact of Recession on Air Traffic Volumes," released in late December. In 1991, the last major downturn in air traffic driven by recession rather than terrorist attack, global passenger traffic fell 2.6%, IATA said. "We now forecast that global passenger traffic will fall by 3% in 2009," added IATA. ([www.TravelWeekly](http://www.TravelWeekly.com), 1/8)

Max Starkov at HeBS Releases Top Ten Internet Marketing Strategy Resolutions for 2009

Max Starkov of Hospitality eBusiness Strategies (HeBS) knows a thing about internet marketing for the Hospitality market. He firmly believes that a comprehensive, ROI-centric Internet marketing strategy is the hotelier's perfect "survival tool" in the current economic environment. He continues, "In the difficult year we expect 2009 to be, a well-executed Internet marketing strategy can help smart hoteliers generate incremental revenues, improve marketing ROIs, retain existing and attract more affluent travelers, and out-smart the competition. For the past almost 14 years, our experience shows that Internet-savvy hoteliers with robust Direct Online Channel strategies are the winners in economic downturns like this one."

What are hoteliers to do in these dire economic times? How can they avoid discounting pressures and further commoditization of the hotel product? What type of marketing initiatives will produce the highest return-on-investment (ROI) in 2009? What are the best approaches to retain customers in this environment? For the answers to these questions, a few directions to head in and actions steps to take, read The "2009 Top Ten New Year's Internet Marketing Strategy Resolutions", presented by Hospitality eBusiness Strategies (HeBS) for the ninth year in a row. Full article can be accessed via the HeBS website

<http://www.hospitalityebusiness.com/documents/Jan09HeBSArticle-TopTenInternetMarketingResolutions.pdf>

(TravelMole Newsletter)

Grand Canyon, Loch Ness Compete as Nature Wonders

The Grand Canyon, Mount Everest and Loch Ness will vie with more than 200 other spectacular places in the next phase of the global competition for the New 7 Wonders of Nature, organizers said Wednesday. The 261 nominees from 222 countries include some of the most famous mountain peaks, lakes, and other attractions, such as the Great Barrier Reef and Niagara Falls. Over a billion people are expected to join in Internet voting that will nominate 77 semifinalists for the top natural wonders, which will share in the glory already enjoyed by the seven man-made wonders chosen 18 months ago. "We are calling on people all over the world to actively show their appreciation for our ... natural world by joining together to celebrate the most extraordinary sites on our planet," said Tia Viering, spokeswoman of the New 7 Wonders campaign.

The Swiss-based nonprofit foundation collected 441 nominations over the Internet since it opened the selection process in 2007. The foundation then chose the top vote-getter from each country, making a list of 222 sites. The overall list rose to 261 with the inclusion of sites shared by two or more countries — such as Niagara Falls and Lake Superior between Canada and the United States, and the Matterhorn, between Switzerland and Italy.

Votes can be cast until July 7. Registration on the Web site aims to prevent people from voting twice. The quarterfinalists include some lesser known sites, such as Yasur Volcano on the south

Pacific island of Vanuatu or Nigeria's Zuma Rock, a giant monolith in the middle of the African country. A panel of experts in nature, chaired by Federico Mayor, former chief of UNESCO, the U.N. Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, will reduce the list to 21 finalists in July. The seven winners will then be chosen in another round of public voting lasting until 2011, this time by Internet, telephone and text messages.

Around 100 million people voted in the selection of the seven man-made wonders. The winners were the Pyramids of Giza, Egypt; the Colosseum, Italy; the Great Wall of China; the Taj Mahal, India; Petra, Jordan; Christ the Redeemer Statue, Brazil; Machu Picchu, Peru; and the Pyramid at Chichen Itza, Mexico. "The enthusiasm for the campaign, which brought culture out of dusty corners and back to life on front pages, TV screens and computers everywhere, crossed all social and economic lines," said Viering. "Everyone from schoolchildren to entrepreneurs eagerly participated."

Choosing world wonders has been a continuing fascination over the centuries. UNESCO keeps updating its list of World Heritage Sites, which now totals 878 places. The New 7 Wonders campaign led by Swiss adventurer Bernard Weber aims to promote cultural diversity by supporting, preserving and restoring monuments and natural sites. It relies on private donations and revenue from selling broadcasting rights. Full list of nominees on:

<http://www.new7wonders.com/hp/> (By ELIANE ENGELER, Associated Press, Yahoo News)

D.C. Braces for Inaugural Crush

More than 1 million riders are likely to cram into Washington's subway cars on Inauguration Day, shattering the single-day record of 850,000 set this past July 4, city officials said. The system averages 750,000 riders on weekdays and is the nation's second-busiest behind New York City's. Security officials and experts are voicing concern not only for the comfort level of all those riders who face suffocating conditions, but also about protecting the system from terrorists on Jan. 20. Because rail cars and public buses are likely to be full all day, mass transit will get "special attention," said John Perren, who heads the FBI's counterterrorism division in Washington. Amtrak authorities are preparing for a single-day record number of travelers on inauguration morning in Washington's Union Station, an iconic 101-year-old marble structure. "You won't be able to go 20, 30 feet without seeing someone in authority," said John O'Connor, Amtrak police chief. (Page 3A, USA Today)

China Visits Down in Expected Banner Year

The number of travelers to China dropped by two million, or more than 1 percent, in 2008, which was expected to be a banner year for tourism but was damped by Olympics-related security measures and the global economic crunch. It was the first decline in visitor numbers since 2003, when a deadly outbreak of SARS kept many people away. The number of inbound travelers fell to 130 million in 2008, according to China's National Tourism Administration. Experts blamed the drop-off on tightened visa restrictions before the Olympics and May's earthquake in southwest China. (Page A6, Wall Street Journal)

Calendar of Events

Visit www.ArizonaGuide.com to find information on all the exciting [events, festivals and activities](#) held throughout the Grand Canyon State!